

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 1645

As of March 24, 2003

Title: An act relating to protection of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking in the rental of housing.

Brief Description: Addressing protection of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking in the rental of housing.

Sponsors: Representatives Kessler, Skinner, Edwards, Lantz, Moeller, Kirby, Kenney, Lovick, O'Brien, Kagi, Simpson, McCoy, Cody, Ruderman, Flannigan, Upthegrove, Pettigrew, Clibborn, McDermott, Dickerson, Hudgins, Schual-Berke, Santos, Conway, Sullivan, Morrell and Darneille.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Financial Services, Insurance & Housing: 3/27/03.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES, INSURANCE & HOUSING

Staff: Alison Mendiola-Hamilton (786-7576)

Background: There is concern that victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are further victimized when they are unable to obtain or retain rental housing due to their history of abuse.

Under the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act, tenants may terminate their rental agreements if the landlord is notified that the tenant has a valid order of protection, the order has been violated, and the police have been notified.

Summary of Bill: Provisions to protect victims of the crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking from housing discrimination are expanded.

1. A tenant may terminate a rental agreement if the tenant, or a member of the household, is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking and provides the landlord with a valid order of protection, or reports the incident to a qualified third party and is able to provide the landlord with a copy of that report. The request to terminate a tenancy must occur within 90 days of the reported incident.
2. A landlord may not terminate a tenancy based on a victim's status. A landlord may not fail to renew or refuse to enter into a rental agreement based on a tenant's, household member's or applicant's status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
3. A tenant screening provider or credit reporting agency cannot provide a landlord with information about a prospective tenant or household member regarding whether the individual is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including whether the individual is protected by a court order.

4. If a tenant obtains a valid order of protection against a cotenant, the victim can replace the locks at his or her own expense, and the landlord is absolved of any liability that may result.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.